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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/06/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [JA](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: LTG EIKENBERRY VISIT: JAPANESE AID, RING ROAD, PRTS

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) In a thirty-minute meeting on March 2, LTG Karl Eikenberry thanked Ministry of Foreign Affairs International Cooperation Bureau Director General Koro Bessho for Japan's leadership in Afghanistan, telling him that Japan's contributions have been decisive in the success of operations there and giving him an overview of the expected security situation and challenges over the next six-to-twelve months. Bessho warmly thanked LTG Eikenberry, and, noting that the media tend to dwell on negative developments, stated he was encouraged by the more positive description of the situation. He inquired about the best way forward for non-military programs there.

¶2. (C) Bessho explained that Japan has put forth significant effort in providing overseas development assistance (ODA) to Afghanistan, and that he is often called to the Diet to explain such programs. He confirmed that the Japanese government remains committed to completing its portion of the Kandahar-Herat ring road by the end of 2008, if not sooner, and expressed interest in LTG Eikenberry's description of the impact road-building has had on dampening insurgent activity. Eikenberry had described how the hardening of dirt road in a southern province had reduced the travel time between two towns from twelve hours to two, and that the increased activity on the road had resulted in the springing up of markets, a school, and a clinic. Twenty to thirty insurgent attacks had occurred on the road in the six months prior to its hardening, but none happened in the six months after. Given Japan's investment in the Kandahar-Herat ring road, Bessho noted that this example of how infrastructure can foster both security and development would be useful in his discussions with Diet members.

¶3. (C) Bessho also noted that Prime Minister Abe is interested in cooperating with PRTs in Afghanistan, and that the Japanese had been discussing the idea in Brussels and Kabul. LTG Eikenberry noted that cooperation with the PRTs could deepen Japan's relationships with NATO and international forces, as well as give the Japanese government useful experience in the evolving civilian-military cooperative programs taking root in Afghanistan. (Comment: Although "cooperation" was not defined, surrounding discussions suggested any PRT support would be financial.)

¶4. (U) LTG Eikenberry has cleared this message.

SCHIEFFER